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constant succession of lovers, who, by secret and very informal nuptial rites were bound to her for a season, each one of whom was exchanged for another as caprice incited. The spirit of national aggrandizement which influenced Catherine, was a spirit possessed, to an equal extent at that time, by every cabinet in Christendom." This is a piece of special pleading quite surpassing anything the genius of Choate could invent. Of the part she was known to take in the assassination of her miserable husband, Mr. Abbott absolves her on the ground of his debaucheries. The truth is they were both licentious at heart, and Catherine wanted to get her miserable husband out of the way, that she might give freer reign to her passions and sooner achieve the object of her ambition. "In personal character Catherine was humane, tolerant, self-denying, and earnestly devoted to the welfare of her empire. Religious teachers of all denominations freely met at her table." How a woman could be self-denying while giving the freest license to her passions, and whose private life we have the very best authority for saying was but one degree above the commonest outcast, we leave the author to explain. Ignorance might sometimes affix its seal of admiration to the polluted monarch, but we do not like to see the genius and intelligence of the present day devoted to clothing the vile with robes of purity. It is both daring and presumptuous, a pedantic effort to place vice upon virtue's throne, a service in which Mr. Abbott cannot by any possible means gain either the respect or friendship of men free to think for themselves.

A GOOD FIGHT AND OTHER TALES. By Charles Reade. Harper & Brothers, New York.

"A Good Fight" is not one of Mr. Reade's best stories, as some of our critics, inclined to praise whatever issues from the press, would have us believe. Mr. Reade has great merit as a storyteller, whatever may be said of his deficiency in style, or his handling of character. Indeed, we forget his minor defects in the earnestness of his manner and his power of exciting an interest in his characters and holding the attention of his reader. If you join him at the beginning you must accompany him to the end of his story. But you read on, continually expecting what you do not get, and closing the book disappointed. This is forcibly illustrated in the story of "A Good Fight," the scenes of which are laid in Holland; time, the middle of the fifteenth century. There lived in the village of Tergou two worthy burghers, who were blessed with nine children, for which they thanked heaven and the saints, although it was a severe struggle with them to get bread to fill their mouths. Among these children was a son of the name of Gerard, a youth of great aptitude, and who had been from his childhood destined for the priesthood by his mother. Gerard, however, had but little taste for the dry theories of the Church, and soon discovered remarkable skill for transcribing on parchment and illuminating. He was also remarkably ambitious for one of his years, and seems to have, in some mysterious way, acquired in a trice the skill in transcribing and love-making which ordinary mortals fail to attain in a lifetime. This taste for the arts is encouraged by Margaret Van Eyck, who sees in the lad an extraordinary genius, which, if properly encouraged, will secure him fame and fortune. Gerard advances rapidly in learning and skill, and when the King of Holland offers prizes for the best specimens of certain works of art, Gerard, encouraged by his patron, Margaret Van Eyck, enters the list of competitors. A great festival is to be held in the palace at Rotterdam, where the jolly king is to entertain

the competitors, as well as all the dignitaries of his kingdom. Gerard has sent in a specimen of his skill, and armed with two gold crowns and a well-filled wallet, is soon on the road to Rotterdam, elated with the hope of gaining a prize. And here it will be well to mention that the author seizes the opportunity of giving some admirably drawn pictures of the manners and customs of the people of Holland at that day.

Gerard is within a league of Rotterdam, when he overtakes a feeble old man and his beautiful and devoted daughter, who were proceeding to Rotterdam on foot, being too poor to employ asses. The old man has given out from sheer exhaustion, and Margaret not having the means of procuring nourishment for him, they tarry by the roadside. Gerard's generous heart gives out sympathy and kindness without stint, and Margaret's heart is too tender not to be moved by the disinterested goodness of the youth. Gerard unties his wallet, and with the simplicity of a rustic proceeds to kindle a fire and prepare nourishment for the old man. And while engaged in this laudable occupation a flame of inextinguishable love is kindled in their young hearts; and here the interest of the story commences. Love is followed by troubles innumerable. There are romantic incidents cleverly handled, adventures, sentiments, persecutions, imprisonment and escapes enough to satisfy the most ardent lover of melo-drama. The incidents are all cleverly handled and the plot naturally and skillfully developed. We do not wish to spoil a good story by entering further into the details of the plot, which is so evolved as never to weary the reader.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

IN order to accommodate our friends and subscribers, and to relieve us of some of the business cares of our publication, we have made an arrangement with Mr. GEORGE WARD NICHOLS, for an *up-town office* at his gallery (T. W. Parker & Co.), No. 768 Broadway. Mr. Nichols will receive subscriptions and advertisements for the CRAYON, and respond to all matters relating to the business department of the CRAYON.

We take advantage of Mr. Nichols' announcement, on the third page of the cover, to commend him cordially to any of our readers who may be disposed to consult him, or employ his services in connection with art. Mr. Nichols is substantially qualified for the position he takes, both by business energy and promptness, and by a careful study of foreign and domestic art-productions.

Our subscribers in Boston are notified that *Messrs. H. W. Swett & Co., No. 128 Washington street, corner of Water street*, will hereafter act as publishing agents for the CRAYON in Boston. The transfer of the agency from Messrs. Williams & Everett is made with their consent, in order that the CRAYON may enjoy the advantages of an agency with parties in the periodical business.

To Correspondents.—"A Chapter on Rainbows," will appear in the next number.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

History of South Carolina. By W. Gilmore Simms. Redfield. 1859.

The White Hills: their Legend, Landscape, and Poetry. By T. Starr King. Illustrated by Wheelock. Crosby, Nichols & Co., Boston. (A beautiful book.)